

San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area

Resource Management Plan Alternatives Briefing

Tucson Field Office

May 19, 2015

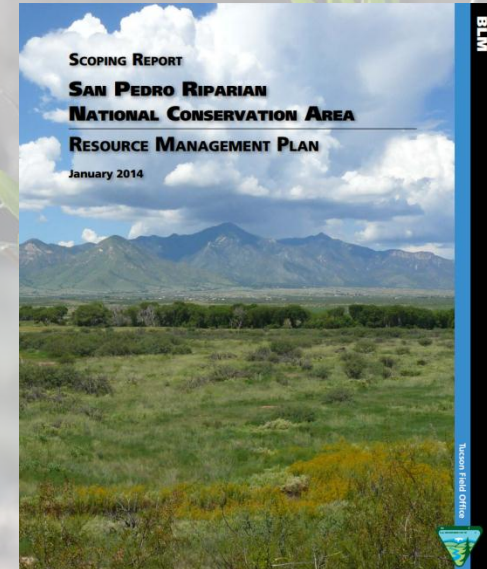
Resource Management Plan (RMP) Refresher

- ***Why Prepare an RMP?***

- An RMP is a blueprint explaining how the BLM will manage areas of public land over a period of time (generally 10 – 20 years).
- The San Pedro River Riparian Management Plan (1989) is not considered a complete RMP.
- Safford RMP (1992) only addresses San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA) on a superficial level.
- Significant changes have occurred since both documents were completed. A new RMP specific to the SPRNCA is needed to guide management decision making.
- Need to have a reasonable range of alternatives.

What We've Done to Date

- **Scoping (April 30 – September 27, 2013)**
 - 133 submissions received with 499 unique comments.
 - Most comments on recreation & travel, livestock grazing, watershed health/function, and water resources.
- **Alternatives Development (Dec. 2013 – present)**
 - Education forums – summer 2013.
 - Resource specific field trips – spring 2014.
 - Adaptive management forum – summer 2014.
 - Intensive consultation among BLM interdisciplinary team and with the State Office.
 - Data Collection and Inventories (visual resources, wilderness characteristics, route inventory and user needs assessment, wild and scenic river, etc).



Steps to the Approved Resource Management Plan

We are here



Public Scoping

Alternatives Development

Stakeholders are now reviewing the draft range of alternatives

Draft Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement Released

Draft Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement
Public Comment Period

Proposed Resource Management Plan / Final Environmental Impact Statement Released

Record of Decision/ Approved Resource Management Plan

April 2013 – Dec 2013

Dec 2013 - Spring 2015

Spring 2015

Jan 2016

Feb to April 2016

Nov 2016

May 2017

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Why are we here?



- Present draft range of alternatives.
- Solicit specific feedback on the draft alternatives:
 - Are the alternatives clear as presented?
 - Is anything missing?
 - Is this a reasonable range of alternatives?
 - Have we been responsive to your input?

What is an Alternative?

- Each alternative is an overall approach to managing the SPRNCA with a unique mix of management strategies and allowable land uses.
- The “no action” alternative, will depict current management and decisions moving forward unchanged.
- All other alternatives suggest modification or additions to the current land use decisions.



Alternative Development Approach

- Collaborative approach with cooperating agencies and public focused on educated engagement;
- Based on issues raised during scoping;
- Designed to be different (avoid the standard “too hot, too cold, just right”);
- Provide a range of alternatives for impact analysis;
 - Ex: Modified grazing, current grazing, no grazing.

Definitions

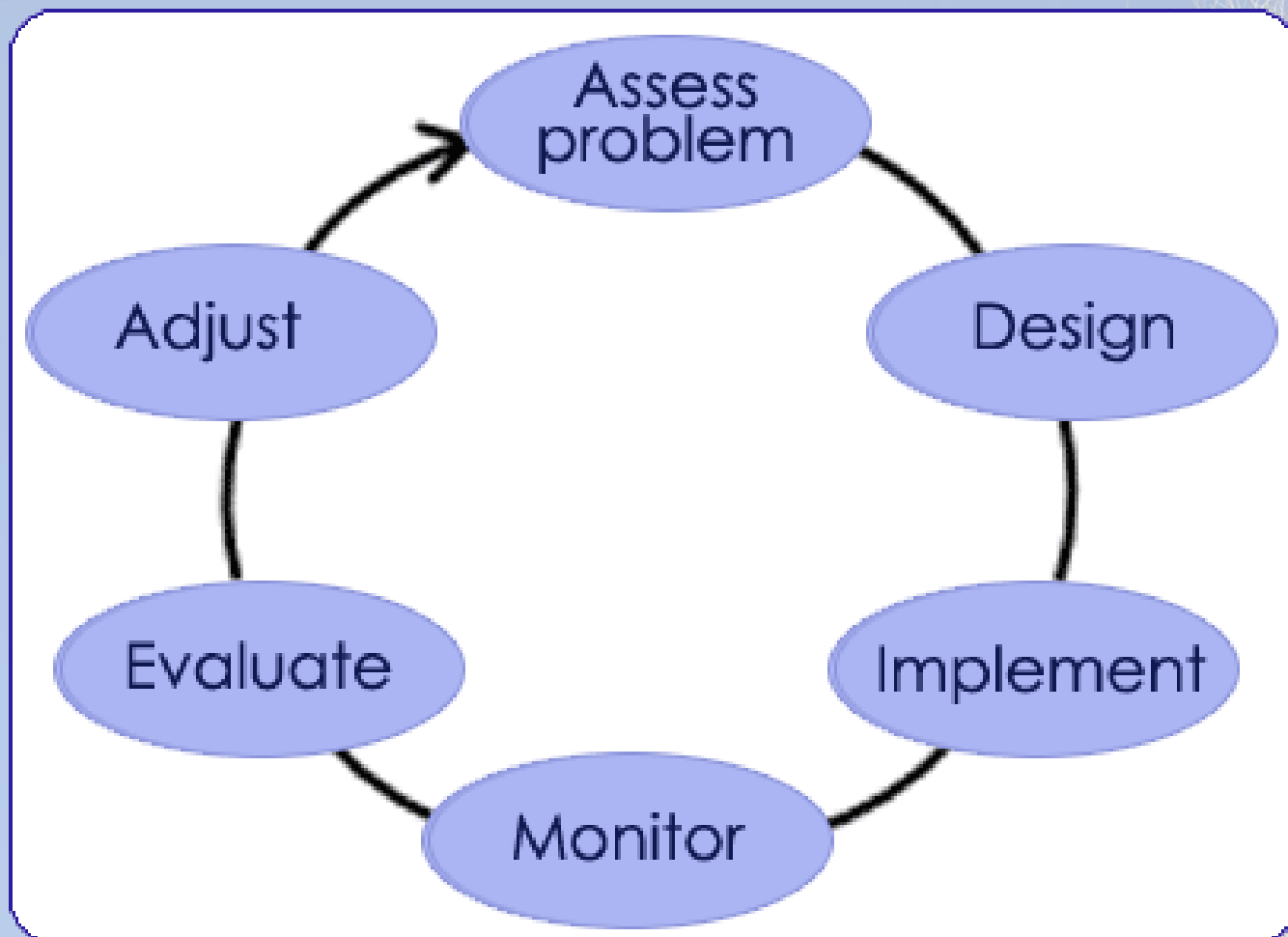
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWC): A roadless area of sufficient size (5,000 acres) that possesses naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for either solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR): A free flowing body of water that possess at least one outstandingly remarkable value (scenery, recreation, geology, fish, wildlife, historical, cultural, or botany).

Definitions

- Visual Resource Management (VRM): System involving inventory of scenic values and establishment of management objectives for those values. Goal of VRM Class I is to preserve the existing character of the landscape. Level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention.

Definitions

- Adaptive Management:



Management Strategies that Would be Unchanged

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Resource Use Emphasis	Alternative C Restoration Emphasis	Alternative D Natural Processes Emphasis
Collaboration and Coordination			
Water Resources			
Land Health Standards			
Monitoring			

Management Strategies that are the Same for all Action Alternatives

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Resource Use Emphasis	Alternative C Restoration Emphasis	Alternative D Natural Processes Emphasis
N/A	Natural Resource Objectives		
N/A	Priority Species and Habitats		
N/A	Fire and Fuels Management		
N/A	Areas of Critical Environmental Concern		
N/A	Adaptive Management Framework		
N/A	Cultural Resource Use Allocations		

Alternative A No Action	Alternative B Resource Use Emphasis	Alternative C Restoration Emphasis	Alternative D Natural Processes Emphasis
<p>No Action Alternative</p> <p>Manage under existing plans (Safford RMP)</p> <p>Limited in scope and precision</p>	<p>Largest diversity and extent of resource uses</p> <p>Moderate “hands on” restoration</p> <p>Medium acreage of protective designations</p>	<p>Emphasizes “hands on” restoration, greatest extent and tools</p> <p>Near existing level of resource uses</p> <p>Lowest acreage of protective designations</p>	<p>Emphasis natural processes as a means of restoration & limits disturbance</p> <p>Low levels of resource use</p> <p>Highest acreage of protective designations</p>

Alternative A - No Action Alternative

- Continuation of existing management under the *Safford RMP* (1992 and 1994) and the *San Pedro River Riparian Management Plan* (1989).
- Continues current public use and resource protection/conservation prescriptions without change.
 - Species reintroduction, water recharge, and stream restoration done on a case by case basis.
 - Limits on recreation.
 - Grazing on four existing allotments.
 - No adaptive management.
- Lack of desired future condition in current management (identified as shortcoming by NRST)
- Does not addresses new issues unforeseen or nonexistent when the current management plans were prepared.

Alternative B – Resource Use Emphasis

- Largest diversity and extent of resource uses.
- Moderate level of “hands on” landscape restoration balanced with increased resource uses.
 - Enhances natural water recharge with a range of techniques.
 - Emphasizes work in the uplands and tributaries/drainages.
- Four existing grazing allotments.
 - Includes forage reserve allotment.
- Focuses on species augmentation and improving populations of species with balanced resource use.
- Broadest diversity of recreational opportunities.
- Protective special designations are prescribed at a moderate acreage.

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Alternative C –Restoration Emphasis

- Highest level of “hands on” landscape restoration.
 - Achieve Natural Resource Objectives as quickly as possible.
 - Widest range of techniques for restoration across entire SPRNCA.
- Moderate recreational opportunities.
 - Increased number of dispersed campsites, no backcountry camping.
- Four existing grazing allotments.
- Focuses on species augmentation and reintroduction of species as habitats are restored.
- Protective special designations are at the lowest acreage.

Alternative D – Natural Processes Emphasis

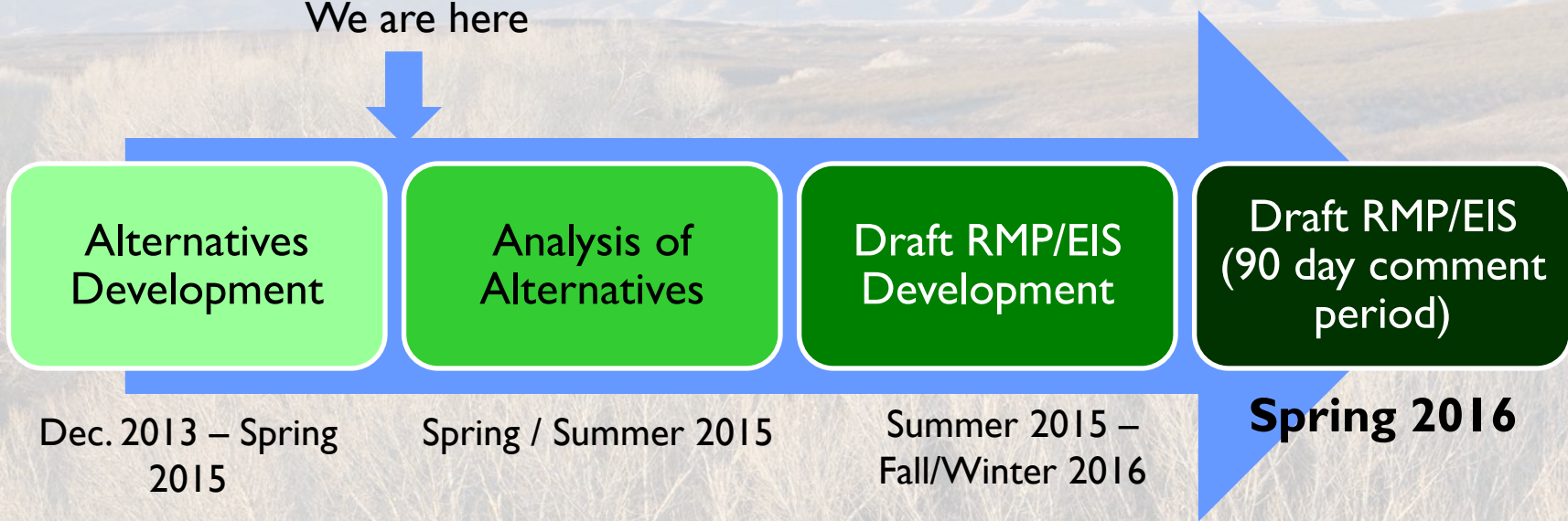
- Allows natural processes and limited “hands on” restoration to improve landscape health.
- Removes all grazing from SPRNCA.
- Uses natural processes and limited “hands on” restoration to enhance natural water recharge.
- Focus of outdoor recreation management is primitive backcountry recreation.
- Emphasizes natural variation and spread/colonization in species populations with minimal intervention.
- Protective special designations are at the highest acreage.

Alternatives Roll Out: Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

- **San Pedro “RMP Road Show”** – team lead, public affairs, management and staff representatives on briefing tour, including meetings with:
 - Cooperating Agencies (May 6th) and upon finalization of alternatives
 - Friends of the San Pedro River (May 13)
 - Upper San Pedro Partnership (May 13)
 - Hereford NRCD (May 26)
 - Conservation groups (June)
 - Other meetings/presentations as requested
- **Sierra Vista public meeting** combined with web posting of draft alternatives summary (May 19th)

Next Steps to the Draft RMP/EIS

We are here



- Feedback from cooperators and the public will be reviewed by management and interdisciplinary team.
- Alternatives will be finalized and analysis of impacts will begin – contained in Draft RMP/EIS.

Next Steps to the Draft Resource Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement



- BLM Planning policy requires the selection of a “Preferred Alternative” in the Draft EIS
- Preferred selection will be based on the following criteria
 - *Consistent with Conservation Values in PL 100-696.*
 - *Gives consideration to economic, environmental, technical, and other factors.*
 - *Input from public and cooperating agencies.*
 - *Results of impact analysis.*
- Regardless of “preferred” selection, proposed Plan in Final EIS will likely reflect a mix of alternatives

Questions?

- Are the alternatives clear as presented?
- Is anything missing?
- Is this a reasonable range of alternatives?
- Have we been responsive to your input?
- Would like input by June 10th, 2015.
- Email, snail mail, are fine.